

# Bard

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# Bard

## **SKILLET**

The necessity of measure is iron.  
Abaft the cookstove the pretty volunteer  
kept off the desert megrims. Too damp  
for saguaros, too dry for a goddam tree.

Only joshuas and a plague of rats.  
Smells good I guessed since I was glassed  
in shyness. Had better, the cook says  
agitating the menstruum in the iron pan  
with a wooden ladle, here taste it.

I still do. The mind is like that.  
We all crouch by the fire. All volunteer.

15 March 2005

*[Writing from a part of the body:]*

I need you. Over and over  
I assert it, the right to need you

and to do, always do  
something about the need. The you.

I have felt you pressed or stretched  
across or on me

but it is me, being me,  
the father of all my voices who

makes us bend and throb and hold  
the many of you as the fulfillment of

a simple need.  
You are the need itself.

15 March 2005  
(class exercise)

## DUTCH STILL LIFE

1.

The mail I sent, the memory  
broken like a wrist

hangs there

hand, can't do anything  
with you

the Sun is the woman who gets in my eyes

2.

Bone trees of late winter

I love you best

you haughty structuralists

still permit the meek light

3.

The door went through me

and I read the books

I forgot the tale I read

and the door banged in the prairie wind

the hymn tune went

clear out of my head

and the wind came in

the tablecloth lifted and fell

only the coffee mug kept it down

and I forgot the taste of everything

then I forgot the wind

4.

I wanted to be the headache  
your hands took away  
the breath from your nostrils  
that smelled of the horizon

5.

I wanted to be a closed house  
with you outside

I'd let you look in the window  
like a living room in Amsterdam

let them all pass by  
let them all see  
the polished tabletop the bowl of fruit the orange cat.

16 March 2005

## **WHAT YOU SHOULD DO –**

soak in my oil.  
focus on my vinegar.  
lick my salt.  
inhale my spiritus vini.  
drink my milk.  
swallow my guesses.  
blink my eyes.  
then close them and remember.

**16 March 2005**

## **LA VIE RELIGIEUSE**

Vinegar sandwich  
song without coal  
walk a mile to the beach  
and watch the cormorants  
retrieve the wedding  
rings of drowned fishermen  
then home again  
time for your bagpipe lesson  
your afternoon tea  
the gospel on tv. Hurry,  
the sky is full of light.

**16 March 2005**

=====

I want to be another animal.  
One that runs along the lines of light  
one that touches and penetrates even  
but does not stay  
no more than a hotel  
in one of those famous cities  
where subway stairways hide in lobbies  
and there are escalators everywhere there are differences  
and hawks nest over store fronts  
and I don't have to dream anymore.

17 March 2005



=====

Knowing something else  
helps. A seed.

Most birds need light  
to skim along.

Friction  
everywhere sustains.

That is something I know  
all about, friction.

The messenger must  
make love before he's executed.

17 March 2005

γελσ

My grandfather  
died my mother died  
my father died  
each time a bird  
got in the house

quick rock  
dove flustering  
she-starling

the resolution of time  
means every event  
in human history  
is the same event

we are not an endless river  
we are an exploding sun

a thick thick scar,

Fomenko tells us all kings  
were the same king,  
the Trojan War was the Fourth Crusade,  
Jesus is alive in Paraguay.

In other words  
time is the first of our mistakes.

So this bird now  
looking in the window  
is looking for all of me.

17 March 2005

=====

A poem is a nice thing  
a mausoleum for a moment  
a flag for a regiment  
wandering around in the dark  
inside me looking for you

A poem makes me feel  
I am a Persian carpet  
mostly scarlet mostly indigo  
stretched out in sunlight

with the long-toed naked feet of women  
shuffling along, pouring out  
mint tea for themselves in gold-flecked glasses  
strong black coffee for me  
and I let one of them, you,  
slip a cardamom seed in my cup.

18 March 2005

## MANIFESTO

Organize it. At least. And then  
the Feather and Rubber Band  
Society wearing its one black fez  
opens alleyways to neural traffic

Chicago Chicago I miss your nape  
mixed with salted greens a knife  
pointless yet not blunt and still  
the thought that counts the spirochete

remember him from days between  
the Greeks and Guy Columbo and his  
Royal Palladians sailed across the  
airwaves Mannerist town houses

looking for a better kind of blue.  
O sapphire o ardent volunteers!  
I was your little soul in a camera  
a tiki torch on a Maspeth lawn

keep Slavic-speaking fireflies away  
–honey, it's all abuzz you – and now  
from Poland's icy mountains green  
a symphony by word of mouth

uncoiling the Great Pyramid stone by stem  
until your uncle hollered Hegel  
I have no culture I have only god.  
Fry me a disaster. O leap the leap

again the shadow fall'n from the Moon  
slips down the snow in sunlight, sleep  
I would give wonders if I could sleep  
even dream would be a decent price

Standard & Poore's index of images  
that come when you're asleep  
and what they do inside your mind  
or wherever sleep really lives

and who they do it and what you  
see then sitting here with natural eyes  
scared of understanding but gazing  
steady at the fuzzy morning light.

19 March 2005

## AMERICAN NEUROLOGY

Laws come true when love's  
a statesman isn't it or quick  
translated from the Greek  
into a whim of this elegant  
patois of ours, West Dutch  
a little frenchified, carbon  
molecule you make all the  
differences dear buy me one  
today or two carats adequate  
or one red cat the principle  
is radical to Parmenides  
a 'two-ity' he said translating  
a Two of Horses on a Nun of Roads  
gallop coarser mindset gods  
spelt, gook running down my thigh  
because I needed no you wanted  
and the "Emperor's Astonishment"  
played by the Dragoons' band  
and the trolley runs yellow up  
the flanks of Mount Tubercular  
from which you can see the whole  
flat compact city steffy up  
from the Danube system, the history  
of humankind is the history of water  
spill me all over your receptors  
gluey with the ultimate digits of  $\pi$ .

20 March 2005

=====

I don't know to have to do to ask her  
it usually blue the same thing a pattern  
constantly inconstant what you love  
is change the other trees keep walking

blerwm blerwm the other poets  
shuddered on their lips when tried to  
talk there should be vowels for us  
beyond the dozen they give us to begin

let ü be there and ö among the fossils  
we unearth as we talk o smoke the light  
o amplify the wind until we read  
the simpering consonants it means to tell

**20 March 2005**

## ODE TO SLEEP

Too little speaking  
and the door to Christmas  
opened wide to accommodate  
shuffle-hordes of sleeping pilgrims  
who knew in their doze-hearts  
better than to wake.

For waking is common  
and a river never does it  
or a star and such good things,  
really good, who *do*,  
personless animals of slaughter and renewal  
and here is milk also  
for you, spendthrift sunshine  
drunkenness-generous moon.

Do it in your undream,  
who oiled your skin, who wreathed  
arms around you, what land's  
dust in this you almost wake with  
gritty on your forearms and your side?



We do our loving also in the night  
because of all our businesses  
love is nearest to rivers  
the unending personless yearning hot  
silence unrushing, sleep.

21 March 2005

## THE FIRST THING HE DID

The first thing he did was go outside and breathe  
slow deep slow inhalings while he counted all his gods  
or as many as he could remember, dawn sun  
through the rose petals of his closed eyes.

How gold turns red on its way to the white place  
dark inside him. None of it means what he thinks  
he thinks, it's all there, curious and not at all close  
yet he smells it, the melting snow of three days thaw

the softening earth below. Still hard an inch down,  
smells the snow and smells the light and the ground  
faint mildew of last years lawn undone now  
almost shocking with alien life, things he should not see,

like a wounded animal that limp smelly grass  
oozing out from underneath the snow. Closed his eyes  
again and breathed, the birds more numerous,  
arbitrating in the vulnerable trees. Leaf mould,

rank possums have been here, and shadowtails  
afraid of men, then the other smell, faint, faint  
mercaptans of the mouffette the English called the  
*skunk*, how can they wrap tongues around that,

meek weasely thing men are frightened of.

What were we like before we were afraid?

He thought maybe fear is just a culture thing  
like going to mass on Sunday or calling all the

living things by just one name, animals,  
as if all squirrels were just one squirrel  
and we live with shadows. Nothing to fear.  
No one there to be afraid. Only the sunlight

he was breathing in, the limitless atmosphere  
thin on mountain tops but adequate, the earth  
is always, and is adequate. This breathing game  
he called it, that's all this is, breathing and thinking

making stuff up to change the deep allowing  
rhythm of the breath, fear and quick desire,  
blue exhaustion, runnings and leapings, beds  
stairways and fences: all about the gasp.

I will not gasp, he said out loud, talking to that Dane  
last night who said I will not dance. I wonder  
if the Dane is breathing, how deep his chest is,  
how many miles inside her this breath rose

I breathe in now, deep down where he and I  
are just breaths mingling harmlessly I hope  
a nest of rhythms weaving nothing but the air.  
It does not do to think like this, he thought,

it changes the inner trajectories of breath,  
I lose the world inside me. Think about the breath  
not what the breath is breathing. Think about  
the in the linger and the out. Nothing else.

All the trees and snows and birds ride in me now,  
I am the sky for them, their simple word  
written on my simple spaces, it seems to me  
I make the whole forest happy with my breathing.

22 March 2005